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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to relate the occupational psychology of high school principals to the emergent problems of urban secondary education. Research was conducted through extended personal interviews and a series of seminars on topics relevant to secondary education. Individually, the principals emerged as embattled administrators. Collectively, principals appeared to be holding the line against encroachments on their authority within the schools and defending the system, their careers, and themselves from outer attack. The study concludes that education might be best served by separating the principals' role into two components--that of administrator of the school as a business-like organization and that of head teacher of the school as an educational enterprise. Qualifications for the latter would stress training in experimental educational techniques and in the political and empathetic skills needed to actively promote the schools' interests politically through working directly with parents and other interested groups. (Author/MF)

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# HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS STUDY SEMINAR

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Summary

The purpose of this study was to relate the occupational psychology of high school principals to the emergent problems of urban secondary education. Research was conducted through extended personal interviews plus a series of seminars on topics relevant to secondary education. The major finding was the defensiveness of principals whose main concern is with holding the line against encroachments on their authority within the schools and defending the system, their careers, and themselves from outer attack. The organizational instruments for this defense are the High School Principals Association and the Council for Supervisory Associations which function as veto groups to protect their members' interests. A rhetoric of professionalism is used to justify claims to expertise and demands for autonomy. The principals' central dilemma then becomes the maintenance of his ideology of professionalism in the face of the failure of the schools to adequately educate its lower-class Negro and Puerto Rican clientele. We conclude that education might be best served by separating components of the principals' role into separate positions - that of administrator of the school as an organization and that of "head teacher" of the school as an educational enterprise. Qualifications for the latter would stress training in experimental educational techniques and the political and empathetic skills needed to actively promote the schools' interests politically through working directly with parents and other interested groups.

## Purpose and Methods

The purpose of this study is to describe and analyse the occupational psychology of New York City high school principals and its relation to the emergent problems of urban high schools. By focusing on the person most directly involved in high school administration we hoped to locate key problems of the high school as seen through the role of the principal and to examine any contradictions, tensions, and misconceptions standing in the way of adequate responses to the problems of urban secondary education.

The research consisted of extensive open-ended interviews with twenty-three principals plus a series of four seminars attended by a group of twelve principals during the 1967-68 school year. Each seminar meeting was addressed by a speaker on a topic relevant to urban secondary education with ample time for discussion. Topics of the seminars were (1) What should be the role, if any, of the community in educational decision-making? (2) What is the future of integrated education in the New York City public schools? (3) What curriculum is appropriate for the urban secondary education of the future? (4) Who should pilot the future of public education in New York City?

See page 22 for a full discussion of the seminars.

Background research for the study involved the compilation of a bibliography relevant both to broad educational issues and to all aspects of education in New York City. Newspapers and magazines were clipped regularly so that a large file was built up which included reports of news events, editorial and other commentaries, magazine articles, etc. The collection and study of these materials proved essential for a background understanding of the issues and dilemmas of contemporary education in New York City and the political and organizational context within which principals and other schoolmen must operate.

The early stages of our study were aided a great deal by contact with a district superintendent who had previosly been a high school principal. Extensive discussions with him led to the formulation of a set of open-ended questions to elicit the principals' description of their role and the problems of the high school as they saw them. He also aided us in formulating a tentative list of seminar topics of relevance to urban secondary education. At his suggestion we asked the cooperation of the High School Principals Association in arranging for interviews with principals. Although the Association decided not to formally participate, Mr. McReynolds was able to interview the president of the Association at his high school. This, our initial contact with our sample, led to helpful suggestions and direct aid in contacting other principals and scheduling interviews with them. Approximately one half (12) of our

interviewees were contacted through referral by past interviewees. The rest were chosen in order to be sure our sample included principals from all types of high schools (15 academic, 6 vocational, and 2 specialized) and a diversity of neighborhoods and student clientales. Information about the different schools was obtained from principals, who were generally quite knowledgeable about the character of the schools in the system.

Others besides principals interviewed in the course of the study included two district superintendents, the chairman of the Council of Supervisory Associations who was on leave from his high school, two ex-high school principals (one retired and one currently employed outside of New York City), four high school teachers and five high school students. In addition Mr. McReynolds attended several public meetings at which principals' representatives spoke and one city-wide meeting of the teacher's union. These meetings were related to the various proposals for "decentralization" of the New York City public schools initiated by the publication of the "Bundy Report" in November, 1967.

The individual interviews were conducted by Mr. McReynolds who at the time of the study was Assistant Professor of Sociology at Briarcliff College and is currently at Adelphi University. He has two years experience in high school teaching in the U.S. and one year in London. He holds an M.A. in sociology from the New School for Social Research and at the time of the study he had completed all work towards the Ph.D. except for the dissertation.

Interviews with principals were conducted at schools during school hours with the exception of two which were conducted in principals' homes. Our research goal was defined to the principals as "a study of the role of the high school principal in the educational process" funded by the U.S. Office of Education. Interviews typically lasted two hours with a range of from one and a half to three hours. Discussions not fully relevant to our study were not discouraged because of the importance of establishing and maintaining rapport. Principals were suspicious and defensive toward "outsiders" probing into school matters and an attitude of sympathetic interest rather than critical inquiry was maintained by the interviewer. It was helpful that the interviewer was younger than any principal and he was working toward but had not received a Ph.D. in sociology. Thus while not a status equal he was given recognition for academic striving and legitimation as a researcher for working on a project funded by the U.S. Office of Education. Several principals complained that few academic researchers or journalists writing on education in New York City were "objective"; this they felt would be partially rectified if their views were accurately recorded and transmitted to the public.

The interview schedule was submitted to, and approved by, the U.S. Office of Education. The questions were formulated so as to evoke discussion of important areas of the principals' experience and problems. Our interview procedure was predicated on the use of the open-ended interviewing technique; the questions were straightforward and proved to be effective in stimulating discussion.

We chose the interview format rather than some form of questionnaire because we regarded the study as an exploratory approach to this occupational group and we wanted the quality of response and the understanding of their role of the principals themselves. This we regarded as fundamental data, more important than a questionnaire survey of "attitudes", etc. for an understanding of the principals' role and occupational psychology.

Follow-up questions were needed during the interviews only in order to clarify or extend the discussion of specific points deemed useful by the interviewer. The principals interviewed proved in general to be highly articulate and cooperative in presenting and clarifying their views on educational matters. Since in practice answers to different questions overlapped it was often necessary to omit or rephrase questions to avoid being redundant.

Following is the set of questions around which the interviews were focused:

1. How did you become a principal? Why did you become one?

2. In what ways has the job changed during your career? Is it different now from what you had expected it to be?

3. What are your main duties as principal? What are your main problems?

4. What groups must you deal with? (e.g. pupils, parents, teachers, Civil Rights groups, various organizations, Board of Education) What is your relationship to each of them?

5. What makes a good/bad principal?

6. What changes would you recommend that would permit you to function as you would like to? What could the Board of Education do to facilitate the work of principals? What would you do if given unlimited resources and power to effect changes in the secondary school system?

7. Is there any special training that might help in the preparation of principals?

8. How do you think the urban high school can meet the many demands being placed upon it? What curriculum would you recommend?

9. How might the public image of the high schools be improved?

## Report and Analysis of Findings

New York City high school principals are living out the tensions of the "crisis in urban education" in their occupational lives. They daily confront that crisis in the form of a changing school population which makes new demands on the school, new groups that must be dealt with, and new issues and arguments that must be ideologically absorbed, refuted, or evaded. The high school principals are men on the defensive, confronting an educational world they never made and never anticipated; it is not surprising that their model for the future as well as their defense against the present is their vision of the past.

The elements of this analysis are, then, (a) the changing reality of urban public education and its confrontation with (b) the principals' professional ideology and career expectations within (c) the limits set by their occupational (i.e. "structural") position. It is the conflict between reality and rhetoric which creates the principals' central dilemma; their response is a collective re-working and re-affirmation of their ideological position. They thus become defenders of the status quo at the very time that the maintenance of their claim to professional expertise and educational leadership requires that they respond creatively to the crisis which challenges them.

The high school principal has good reason to look to the past since it is long experience rather than formalistic training that the principal invokes as the source of his professional expertise. It is in this past experience that principals formed their impressions of what a good school is, what a principal does, and what education means. Recent changes in the schools and in the principal's role are responded to with a mixture of regret and resentment. They see no academic training that can replace on-the-job experience, and the criteria used in selecting principals in other school systems - such as political favoritism or community popularity as a teacher or coach - they regard as obviously inferior to the exam-and-experience system by which they achieved their positions. Standing as they do at the apex of a system of difficult exams and long service they are proud of their achievements: they feel that the selection process does indeed get the best men. As a district superintendent stated: "They are very intelligent, very capable, well-informed, courageous, and articulate. They are an elite club with fierce loyalty to one another." This is an "elite" based on personal accomplishment proved in open competition ("Even the worst principal is a scholar in some field."); and structurally they hold an elite position in the public school system - they are high school principals.

Principals have much in common and despite their protestations that they, like all humans, exhibit a wide range of personality types, occupational styles, attitudes, and ideas, our interviews indicate a great deal of similarity among them regardless of type of school or neighborhood or length of service.

Most principals are Jewish (estimated at "at least 80%" by the head of one of the major associations of supervisors) and most entered the school system as teachers during the Depression. As Jews they are likely to put a high cultural value on education and for these men in particular the value of education is obvious - it is both the content and prerequisite of their careers. Several principals revealed some conflict between their sympathy for the poor, especially Negroes, who need a chance to rise as they did and resentment toward the same group for not being actively committed to and respectful of the value of education.

The Depression provided a bench-mark against which most principals can measure a substantial financial success. In addition, the extreme competition for positions during the Depression made success on the teachers' exam an academic distinction in itself. In interviews several principals mentioned the small number of applicants who were accepted at that time and that the competition included men with Master's degrees. The exam system in general legitimates the principal's feeling of personal accomplishment while it publicly establishes his credentials as a superior administrator and scholar. Each advancement in the system, from teacher to department chairman to principal is earned through hard study and a good record on the job. A district superintendent stated chidingly to a group of principals: "We got where we are by being good boys and girls." It is his proven ability in academic competition plus his long experience in the schools which provides the principal with the sense that he possesses the technical, esoteric knowledge (unavailable to the layman) which is needed for a successful claim to professional status.

The exams, however, are acknowledged (somewhat evasively) to be of little relevance to the demands of the job. Since on the written parts the point spread tends to be rather narrow, only a few points assume great importance in ranking the examinees. Study courses are available taught by men familiar with past exams. In addition to written and oral exams, the candidate's job performance is evaluated and here good record-keeping is essential. One must have documentary evidence of how, say as a department chairman, one helped a teacher "grow" through conferences with him or her.

It obviously is not a system to encourage and reward the innovative or the critical. This is not to say, however, that it does not select competent men. It is that competence is oriented almost entirely toward mastering the tasks, definitions of problems, and the rhetoric of the established system. And the exam system is of course administered by men who are a product of it: the Board of Examiners.

High school principals, in seeming consensus with nearly everyone in American society, take for granted that "education" and "achievement" mean the acquisition of academically useful symbolic skills and middle-class demeanor. The desired student is polite, respectful of authority, and is "motivated", i.e. accepts school-learning as important. The corresponding model of what a school should be is a smoothly functioning organization of personnel and materials in which teachers teach and students "achieve". Neither the rationale of the school nor the authority of its staff is questioned. The best students carry their education further by going to college and the rest have been prepared to make a decent living and to live decently. Those who fail or lose interest know and accept that it is their own fault and quietly take their appropriate place in the job structure. Academic subjects are watered down for the less able while even in the worst school pride is taken in those few who have been "reached", helped, and possibly will go on to college. The rest are exposed to as much academic education as they can benefit from. This model holds for vocational high schools as well as for academic high schools. The teaching of vocational skills rather than academic subjects holds an inferior value within the system. Vocational schools have "college bound" programs for the better students in the hope that they will be able to go on to community colleges. The vocational schools have been attacked, however, for being "dumping grounds" for minority group students which exclude them from academic opportunities and thus from real occupational opportunity.

The middle-class model of what education is and what a school should be is most clearly expressed when lower-class and non-academic students are discussed:

> What harm is there for a child to have to use decent language, dress decently, and sit in an orderly classroom? Is that middle-class? Well, I say what's wrong with it?

Describing a meeting of the High School Principals' Association which was addressed by Dr. Frank Reisman on the subject of the "culturally deprived child", a principal remarked with some indignation:

> Following his talk one courageous soul asked for an example of the virtues of the lower class which he claimed weren't being recognized and he suggested their wonderful use of language and verbal expression. But their wonderful language is full of four-letter words that have no place in the classroom! How can you encourage them to use language like that? Why, we'd be the first to be criticized if we did!

The meaning of "educational achievement", defined in practice by scores on standardized tests, has rarely been opened to question and debate even by those militant Negroes most critical of the school system. They are critical of the schools' failure to teach black children so they can advance to middle-class jobs; what they want taught is basically the same things that the schools teach to white, middle-class children. This is fortunate for the principal as he is the guardian and trustee of that definition of education and presumably an expert in transmitting it. The issue then becomes one of assessing the blame for the schools' failure to make this definition of education a viable reality for a lower-class Negro clientele. Defenders of the system say the lower-class child fails to learn; the critics say the schools fail to teach.

The high school principal of the past, at least from the perspective of the present, was a dignified, erudite, and slightly distant figure, autonomous in authority, and respected both inside and outside the school. In both respects the principal of today feels cheated. Within the school his freedom of action has been narrowed by the teachers' union and the increasing bureaucratization of the school system. Outside the school he feels subject to continuing attacks from many critics including disrepectful, and sometimes openly hostile attacks from members of "the community".

The recognition of the UFT as the representative of the New York City school system's teachers in 1959 has led to important changes in the principal's day-to-day performance

of his role. The principals interviewed consistently remarked that the union contract has seriously encroached upon their perogatives within the school. The local chapter of the United Federation of Teachers, with which each principal must deal, offers its members protection from administrative harassment, arbitrary decisions, and favoritism through the establishment of formal rules regulating teacher-administrator relations and the establishment of grievance procedures. While principals tend to see the union as having "done a lot of good" they resent the imposition of formal rules on their dealings with the teaching staff. These rules tend, in their eyes, to reduce their relations with the staff to a simple employer-employee relationship rather than one of "professional cooperation". Because of the elaborate grievance procedure it is now difficult to remove an incompetent teacher and usually troublesome even to give one a low rating since any charge must be fully explained and documented if challenged. Matters that in the past were handled informally - such as helping students after school - are now either incorporated into funded programs or formally regulated with the effect being that teachers tend to work only for time paid by contract. Assignment of teachers to school duties for which teaching time is reduced must now be advertised within the school and periodically rotated, with appointements of applicants determined by seniority rather than "ability". Staff meetings are limited to one forty-minute meeting per month (found by one principal to average twenty-three minutes of actual meeting time). The union thus presents itself as a source of constraint and, occasionally, a means of harassment as teachers have collectively gained in power vis-a-vis administrators.

The union negotiates its contract directly with the Board of Education. Since representatives of supervisors are not directly involved, they must live with a contract they have not negotiated. In negotiations with the Board of Education supervisors are of course employees as are the teachers. Their place in the hierarchy is thus akin to that of "middle-management": they have considerable authority over the schools but little within the system which maintains the schools. In order to gain additional strength and largely in response to the establishment of the teachers' union, the Council of Supervisory Associations was formed as spokesman for the common interests of the various principals' associations, department chairmen, assistant principals, etc. It successfully lobbied for the passage of a state law requiring automatic pay increases for supervisors proportionate to those attained by teachers. This, of course, has led to union resentment since the supervisors have not joined the union in their efforts, including two strikes, to receive pay increases.

In addition to the union principals see the increasing bureaucratization of the school system as a threat to the perogatives of the past. Assignment of teachers and substitutes is controlled and regulated by central headquarters subject to the provisions of the union contract. An unstable teacher population, with a high turnover in schools which in the past had only the problem of replacing those retiring, has resulted from the increasing enrollments since World War II and a corresponding teacher shortage.

Until recently the high schools were directly responsible to their own functionally autonomous unit, the Division of High Schools. Although this unit still exists administration of the high schools has been "decentralized" so that all except the "special" high schools (e.g. Music and Art) are now under the authority of the local district superintendent for whichever of New York City's thirty school districts the high school is in. At the time of our study this change seemed to have had little practical effect since the district superintendent's office tends to be only an intermediate transmission point for directives and reports between central office and the high schools. In principle, however, it represents a giving in by the Board of Education to "community pressures" and demands for "local control". Since high schools often draw students from across district lines principals regard the policy as impractical and functionally irrational.

The local school boards are at present appointed by the Board of Education and have only an advisory function. The local board visits each school at least once a year but, except in three experimental districts, it lacks even the power to hire the district superintendent. None of the principals interviewed saw his local board as a threat or an interference in the performance of his duties. Several principals, however, expressed annoyance that the local district superintendent, though cooperative, was not a high school man and could hardly be expected to know and understand their problems.

Although the principal has some freedom in shaping his school's curriculum and in the choice of personnel, the school budget and the allocation of new personnel are controlled by the central bureaucracy. The work the principal does is administrative; few are directly engaged in aiding, supervising, and rating classroom teachers. Although most say the real job of the principal is the improvement of classroom instruction, principals are much more likely to be involved with such problems as the proper management of a large cafeteria, the sophisticated scheduling needed to make

full use of an overcrowded school, the collecting of information and preparation of reports for superiors, acting as final arbiter in discipline and organizational problems, and representing the school to its publics. The principal is responsible for the provision of an organizational setting that is the prerequisite for classroom teaching. Staff, students, materials, time, and space must all be properly allocated for the efficient and routine transmission of knowledge and skills from a staff of perhaps 250 to a conscript mass of 3 to 5,000 students daily. Although educational ends are pursued, the principals' time is monopolized by the press of immediate managerial imperatives:

> What is most significant from where I sit in the principal's office is that the entire philosophy of the high school principal is changing. It's very different from what it used to be. At one time we considered ourselves educators. I think the problem is much too complicated, the organization is much too vast, the ramifications are too great, the partners in the enterprise are too many for us any longer to serve as educators. It seems to me that the changing role of the high school principal is to move from educator to administrator, and I think this is what is happening in the high school picture. With 4800 children in my school and 245 teachers, with 50 or 60 new ones coming in each year, with a mass input of community decision and policy making, with the selection of staff, with the multiplicity of building improvement, of purchasing and so on, the high school principal doesn't have much time left for the educational process.

Despite the encroachment on his prerogatives and the pressing demands of managerial problems, the principal is still a key figure in the school, exercising considerable authority and responsibility. The principal is the key to the "personality" of a school, a vague amalgam of efficiency and morale which one can presumably sense upon entering a school. Although no one could define what general qualities make a "good" principal, all felt it was easy to recognize one - he "does the job effectively". He may be democratic or authoritarian, casual or formal, friendly or

aloof but none of these styles is in itself necessary or sufficient to define the "good" principal. He must be "effective", the implicit criteria being efficiency and orderliness of school operation, good staff morale, and good relations with his various publics.

Of all his publics, the principal has control only over the students. He tends to respond to students administratively - they exist for him either as statistics or as problems. The reading averages, attendence figures, drop-out, and suspension statistics go into the "paper-profile" of the principal's school at headquarters. Discipline problems reach the principal only as the last step in a series of authorities from teacher to department chairman to "dean" or assistant principal. The principal thus stays distant from the routine disciplinary measures necessary to control the students. In a "difficult" school pupil control may be an overriding concern. Attention to fights among students, disrespect toward teachers, and general disorder may absorb a great deal of the staff's time and energy. Symbolic defiance by students such as improper dress or hair length are defined as major problems in the ongoing struggle between staff and students. Since order is the vital prerequisite for teaching, order and education sometimes become almost interchangeable terms. That the necessity for order may itself be a source of educational problems is rarely considered within the bureaucratic structure of mass public education.

Principals are very aware of the "bad press" the public schools have been getting in books, press, movies, and TV reporting. Several were pleased to take the interviewer through their schools to show him "quiet halls and orderly classrooms" in refutation of the disorderly "Blackboard Jungle" image the public schools have been given. Since the authority and respect that is the principal's due is dependent on a favorable public evaluation of the school system, there is considerable sensitivity to critics and resentment that the Board of Education has not defended the system adequately against them. Better public and press relations were seen by many as one of the crucial needs of the educational system at this time with emphasis given to publicizing the achievements and merits of the New York City school system.

The problems underlying the "crisis of urban education" are not, of course, the creation of educational critics. The "reality problem" which the New York City public school system confronts is made up of the following major elements:

(1) a demographic shift in the city's population and in the school-going population, in both cases there being an influx of Negroes and Puerto Ricans and an outflow of middle-class whites - the whites moving to the suburbs or transferring their children to private or parochial schools. (2) the Civil Rights movement and its demands first for integrated education and currently for "equal educational opportunity" even if segregated (3) the documented failure of the school system to educate lower-class Negro and Puerto Rican children to "achievement levels" comparable to those of whites (4) a concomitant change in the job structure making education of at least high school level a requirement for all but the most menial jobs and a college education a prerequisite for better-paying white-collar employment.

Educational advancement is now the main avenue to economic opportunity. The increasing saliency of education in American society has paralleled the demands of Negroes for educational equality, demands given legal sanction and public legitimation by the Supreme Court decision of 1954. Although the basic demand is for economic opportunity, the political battle has to a large extent been focused on the public schools which, since they are visible, local, and tax supported, are more vulnerable to criticism and available to politics than is the economic structure.

The central problem of the public school system in New York City and other major cities is the failure to teach the lower-class Negro (and Puerto Rican) child. This failure, along with the demise of meaningful integration, has led to an increasing "politicization" of the school system, laying open to public view and political debate its role as an allocator of life-chances.

The professional educators whose careers are embedded in the present educational system, a system legitimated by many years of reasonably satisfactory operation, resent the intrusion of "politics" into their professional domain. They are not political men and they are not prepared by experience or ideology to become so. For principals the attack on the school system and its organization is a threat of what might be called "incipient de-professionalization". Their ideological defense against those groups accusing the schools of failure to educate their children is a reiteration of the prerogatives of professionals and the need for public respect:

> How can we stem the very unfortunate tide that is sweeping this city, and I suspect from my reading, other cities, in so far as community relations are concerned? I think we have a lot to blame on ourselves. We have, for example, as the only profession that I can think of, encouraged people regardless of their scholarship, to come in and sit down and give us advice on how to run a public school system. You don't see the legal profession asking the public, for example, to sit on the bench with the judge and give him tips on how to conduct a court case ... and we say come on in, anyone can teach. Now, I think this is one of the things which has led us to our present lack of eminence in the community. I would say this - that one of the greatest problems we face, I think myself the greatest problem, is the loss of professional respect which high school principals once had ... the high school principal then, I think, was a source of professional power, control, and advice primarily because he had the respect of the people in the community. We have somehow yielded that. I think part of the reason is our own timidity ... And we have had a succession of Boards of Education which have been notorious for their lack of guts ... I think it is true and fair to say that the successive Boards of Education have not acted - they have reacted to pressure and they have reacted to shouts and screams - when some show of educational strength and professional strength might have helped us in this situation.

Educators in the public schools are vulnerable since the school system which presumably renders professional services to its clients may in fact be experienced as an agency of domination and control more concerned with its own organizational requirements than the "needs of the children". In any case, the analogy between a massive organization run on public funds which forces its services upon captive clients and the freely chosen fee-paid legal or medical expert is a weak one. The school system of New York City cannot be entirely removed from politics; the decision to "keep education free of politics" is an eminently political one. At a time

of openly expressed public discontent disrupting the previously untested consensus of public support, a claim for professional autonomy will be difficult to maintain. Should hospitals have as little success as schools doctors too would face public criticism, questioning of their expertise, and demands that professional autonomy give way to public (i.e. political) accountability.

As managers (though not directors) of the school system principals have responded publically and politically through the High School Principals Association and the Council of Supervisory Associations. The latter recently initiated a successful lawsuit to prevent the experimental school districts from by-passing the civil service eligibility list of the Board of Examiners in the selection of principals. The June, 1968, Newsletter of the CSA states that "The Executive Board believes CSA must become a powerful union with sufficient funds and manpower to protect its legitimate interests". It calls for sufficient personnel and funds to "provide sufficient manpower for publicity, community organization of supervision, prompt handling of grievances, organization of mass meetings and/or demonstrations, preparation of position papers with adequate research, and other similar services performed by active labor unions." The High School Principals Association received credit from the Schools Editor of the New York World Journal Tribune (Nov. 6, 1966) for acting with the United Parents Association and the Public Education Association to block a program proposed by the Board of Education for promoting integration through the establishment of "clusters" of comprehensive high schools:

> While the Board was mulling the pros and cons of the comprehensive cluster controversy, the coup de grace was delivered this week by the High School Principals Association.
>
> The principals' organization urged its members not to cooperate with the Board or the superintendent of schools in further planning of the comprehensive complex program.
>
> In telling its members not tc cooperate further in planning the program, the association charged that curriculum was being ignored, too much money was being spent and that the whole thing was conceived and was being carried out without consultation with principals.

The high school principals, especially in concert with other supervisory groups, thus have the capability of acting as a "veto group" by if not molding policy at least blocking those policies hostile to its members' interests. The ultimate rhetoric of justification, as with other groups having an interest in school policies, is the "needs of children". All groups politically involved in school politics and policy formation assume or at least claim that those policies which are in its interests are also those best designed to promote "education" or to "meet the needs of the children". One finds, however, little or no discussion of those "needs" as a substantive issue. At the CSA convention held in May, 1968, for example, where the theme was "Supervision in the Critical Years" the panel discussion topics were Living With A Collective Bargining Agreement, Grievance Procedures for Supervisors, and Selecting Leaders for Tomorrows Schools.

In their ideological defense of the school system high school principals tend to claim that the system is much better than its critics allow. Statistics on integration or educational achievement are used to defend the accomplishments of the present school system. The disproportionately large number of New York City students receiving national scholarship awards may be cited as proof of academic quality, statistics on integration need only be compared with those from other major cities to show that New York City has made a major effort in this direction.

> We are <u>not</u> in a spiral of decline as far as I can see. We've just failed to solve the problem of the disadvantaged child. Not that we <u>just</u> failed - <u>we failed</u> - together with every city in the U.S. But section per section of kids we've got statistics you can use by the thousands which show that the New York City system is still a good system and in many respects a superior system.

The blame for the admitted faults of the school system is placed on the multitude of difficult problems with which the school system is confronted. Chief among these problems is the children themselves, many of whom come from disorganized and emotionally damaging homes where the school does not have the support of the parents. Parents demand that their children be educated yet the children do not respond to the curriculum and methods successful with academically motivated middle-class children. Other problems cited by principals are the lack of "leadership" by the Board of

Education and the Superintendent of Schools, the loss of a white middle-class clientele fleeing a growing colored population, demands that the school be a welfare unit and agency of social change, the powerlessness of principals to correct the socio-economic causes of social discontent, the lack of funds for buildings and materials, and the ignorance of "the experts" from whom they would like practical proposals for coping with school problems. Principals express frustration and helplessness in the face of the problems which the schools are being asked to solve without being given the means for doing so:

> The reason that the school has been challenged isn't so much that we didn't do the job well in the past ... we did the job all right until we reached this problem of integration and of dealing with a new kind of student for whom the methods we'd developed weren't adequate. And they were not adequate for reasons well beyond the capacity of the school to deal with. They were not adequate, for example, because of the social structure in which our society lives. They were not adequate because of the restrictions of labor unions, the employment picture, the housing picture. And suddenly what happened to us was that instead of selecting our goals, which were purely and primarily educational goals in the past, we found that goals were suddenly superimposed upon us and we were told "You're not just a school, as it were; you're not just teaching these new students what you've got, but you're going to be the vehicle whereby they're going to be launched as equals into our society."

Despite the many problems faced by high school principals, in our interviewing we were struck by the almost total absence of self-doubt or career regret expressed by principals. Apparently their defenses against inner doubt as well as outer attack are well developed and effective. They of course have tenure which protects them from loss of position or salary but tenure can hardly be sufficient reassurance against anxiety about their performance. Were he to doubt the ideological basis of his authority - the rhetoric of education - the principal would face paralysis in carrying out the duties which keep his school functioning smoothly. It is thus essential that he denounce all

who challenge or attack the school system - those he quickly labels as "enemies of the public schools" and responds to with anger, resentment, and often poorly concealed contempt. Professors of education are commonly typified as going into college teaching because they "couldn't control a classroom" and as having acquired their experience in school systems whose total enrollment is less than that of a large New York City high school. Their credibility as advisors to the practical schoolmen of the system is thus opened to question. Educational critics are particularly resented (the more distant, the more resented) for telling principals how education and schools should be changed without saying how their ideas are to be implemented.

> Most of the people who are presenting major suggestions for the improvement of the schools are people who deal exclusively in generalities. They don't know enough about the things to deal in specifics and I think this is one of the things we're suffering from in education these days - that there is no role for the practical schoolman. Everybody's an educator - the college professors, the professors of education, are sublime educators. Sociologists - they have the center stage. The people who work in schools are rarely consulted about anything. We're not asked ... this to me is the basic fault which exists now so that we have school people arrayed against other people instead of really working cooperatively to solve problems. Everybody is solving our problems without asking what the problems are or what we think ought to be done about them. From the Civil Liberties Union to the Center for Urban Education.

Part of his defense is to immerse himself in the immediate demands of the job. This tends to result in what might be called the "bureaucratization of the imagination". Principals when asked what they would do if given unlimited power and resources often respond with ideas for improving the bureaucratic functioning of their job as it is - "Well, I could use another administrative assistant" or "We need more telephones here." (Several, however, stated that the greatest need is for better teachers.) The kind of experimentation demanded by the failure to "reach" a changing student clientele does not appear to be psychologically available to principals regardless of the security of tenure

and a rhetoric of educational leadership. To ally himself with parents or community groups in an attempt to pressure the Board of Education for school improvements would require as a prerequisite that he accept and acknowledge criticisms of his school and of the system. This would leave him vulnerable to self doubt when he already feels himself under attack and would weaken the collective defenses and mutual support worked out among principals to hold the line against further encroachments on their position or any major change in the system. He will accept new programs which can be absorbed into the routine of the school; he will work with community people if they will see his side of school promlems. In our research the only open expression of self-doubt and questioning occurred during a seminar attended by ten principals:

> There's something that bothers me here. Can we be so right and everybody else so wrong that we have no supporters anyplace? Maybe we are looking at the thing a bit narrowly. I mean, what's wrong with the present situation? Why don't parents keep their children in the public schools? Why has the school system fallen apart? Is there a theory, a political theory here that there are evil-doers like the members of CORE and other organizations who are deliberately pulling the school system down in order to effect some political gains of their own? Is this the only philosophy we have? I'm a little puzzled by this. How could we have come to this pass if we've been so good? Now I've been in this business a bit longer than some of you here - in a difficult area all the time - and I've bemoaned some of the things that have been happening too, and it can happen to any of us in two minutes. It happened in the Harlems and the Bedford Stuyvesants first. But I think we can look at this thing a little narrowly. I mean, if we stop and ask, "What's wrong? - Why has this pablum which has been handed out by CORE and the others been so readily accepted? Why have the other parents been silent if it's been such a patent fraud? Why have they responded by taking their children out of the public schools and putting them into private schools and parochial schools?" Let's be honest about this. What's

> wrong? In what way aren't we serving properly? We can't always take the position - and I think this is the reputation we've gotten in the CSA and the High School Principals Association - of always defending the status quo. Is there anything that anybody else has suggested about the organization of the schools, its curriculum, its reorganization, that we approve of? I've attended our Association meetings for almost fourteen years and we've always been "agin". Why have we always been the victims of the people in the community, instead of playing an active role? ... Whether they've been mistakes on our part or mistakes on the part of the administration or the budget makers or whoever, I think our schools have left a lot to be desired and we have very often been defensive where we should have been taking the role of making changes intially and of taking leadership.

Such self-doubt would be a necessary part of an honest confrontation of the problems which might allow principals to come to terms with the predicament they are in. It probably would mean becoming educators rather than administrators, innovators rather than bureaucrats, and would endanger the collective alliance they have established with one another and other defenders of the established system. It would demand a respect for lower-class children and parents and an experimental attitude toward education neither of which was a prerequisite for advancement in their careers. At a time of social change, political conflict, and educational uncertainty, the principals are, and seemingly can only be, architects of the status quo.

## Description and Evaluation of Seminars

In the initial formulation of our research design we proposed a series of thirty seminars with high school principals over a two year period. This was cut in half by the U.S. Office of Education and further modified during the course of the study as we found interviewing on an individual basis an adequate source of most of the data we sought. Another important factor in our decision, however, was the difficulty encountered with scheduling because of the limited time the principals contacted had available. School vacations further limited their available time and prevented use of facilities at the New School for Social Research. We thus reduced the number of seminars to four with the approval of the Office of Education.

During the individual interviewing each principal was asked if he would be interested in a series of seminars to be held during the 1967-68 school year. Those who expressed an interest were contacted soon after the public schools opened in the fall. Six of the twelve participants were selected in this manner. Several of these people were asked to recommend other principals they thought might be especially interested and we eventually filled out the desired quota of twelve participants. Two of the twelve were principals of vocational high schools, one was from a specialized school, and the rest were from academic high schools. The presidents of both the High School Principals Association (academic) and the Vocational High School Principals Association participated. Participants' length of service as principals ranged from two to fourteen years, the average being 7.2 years.

Topics for the seminars were tentatively formulated from the beginning of our interviews and discussed with principals. In order to elicit interest and, hopefully, participation we sought topics the principals themselves thought vital and thus worthy of their time and our research effort. The following topics were finally formulated:

1st seminar - What should be the role, if any, of the community in educational decision making?

2nd seminar - What is the future of integrated education in the New York City public schools?

3rd seminar - What curriculum is appropriate for the urban secondary education of the future?

4th seminar - Who should pilot the future of public education in New York City?

The speakers selected for these seminars were:

1st seminar - A research sociologist from the Center for Urban Education who had written extensively on ideas for educational reform.

2nd seminar - A member of the central headquarters staff who had published research on integration in the New York City public schools.

3rd seminar - A district superintendent with a wide reputation for success in ghetto schools and as an outspoken critic of the school system.

4th seminar - A high school principal who was the head of the major supervisory association.

These were selected from a list of speakers who we thought both knowledgeable and provocative. We sought speakers who had been critical of the public schools as well as spokesmen for the system with the hope of eliciting a full range of response from our panel. We conferred with both academic colleagues and principals in making our selections.

The four seminar meetings were held in a seminar room at the New School for Social Research. Each was taped and manuscripts were typed. Each participant received $30. per session attended. The researchers presented themselves as disinterested observers concerned with the problems of urban secondary education. Each speaker was given about an hour for his presentation followed by an hour of discussion.

In addition to the principals and speakers, an advanced graduate student from the New School for Social Research doing his dissertation on public education attended all sessions as did a teacher. Both were invited in order to add additional points of view in the discussions as well as to aid us in our analysis of the seminars. For the second seminar on integration we invited a spokeswoman from the black community who had been publicly active in educational affairs to join the seminar as a participant.

In each seminar meeting the principals very quickly labled the speaker as either a "friend of the public schools" or an enemy and responded accordingly. Those seen as enemies were greeted during their presentations with such calculated irreverence as overtly demonstrated inattention, barely audible remarks ("Why do we have to sit here and listen to this crap"), pencil tapping, and occasional looks of disgust.

In the first session the speaker presented statistics demonstrating the school system's failure to "reach" and educate the children of the ghettoes. He concluded with an

appeal for sympathy for those being left out of society and unaided by the schools. The speaker attacked neither the goals nor the nature of mass education but merely documented its lack of success. He asked for an admission of this as a basis for constructive discussion and stated his support for the concept of "community control" of the schools as an aid in making the schools more effective by encouraging parent and community involvement. The principals present responded to him as a representative of all outside critics, especially academic researchers, who do not know or understand the real nature of the problems of public education and who give schoolmen data on matters they already know about but give it critically without providing answers to the problems they discuss. There was an angry defense of the virtues of the school system, of the difficulties in dealing with ghetto children, and the absurdity of letting "unqualified", politically-motivated insurgents take over the schools from those who have had a lifetime of service, experience, and commitment in public education. Although this stance was basically a self-interested one, it was given authenticity by the righteous anger and sense of personal indignation displayed. In the face of misguided politicians, a misleading press, civil rights groups, ghetto militants, sociological researchers, and academic critics the principals angrily closed ranks and struck back to defend a system they consider basically good but misguidedly maligned and in danger of being disrupted and perhaps dismantled. The meeting ended with the speaker enraged and defending himself by counter-attacking the principals who he saw as unwilling to accept the legitimate demands of "the community". The hostility he encountered was so upsetting to the speaker that he called a future speaker to warn him of the ordeal he was to face.

The second seminar was addressed by a professional schoolman who had been a high school principal and was at the time a member of the staff at Board of Education headquarters. There he had done research on integration and segregation in the New York City public schools. In contrast to the previous meeting, the principals were polite, took notes, raised their hands as though in a classroom, and complimented the speaker on being well-prepared. They in fact acted out an example of what a good classroom should be like. A tone of mutual respect was maintained even when there were disagreements. The principal who had led the attack in the first seminar sat next to the speaker and remained silent the entire evening.

The speaker presented a mass of statistics showing that while the city's public schools were becoming increasingly segregated, more had been done for integration in New York City than in any other major American city. It was the attempts at integration which had in fact led whites to flee, the end result being further segregation and, because of the conflicts and criticisms engendered, a loss of public confidence in the school system. However, dedication to the

principle of integrated education was used as a basis for opposing decentralization of the school system. While stating that more might have been done, the speaker's presentation was basically a defense of the "herculean efforts" of the Board of Education and a well-documented reply to its critics.

The only potential "enemy" at the session had been invited as a result of the speaker's own suggestion that since his views would probably be in general accord with those of most of the principals it might be worthwhile to invite an "outsider". We therefore invited a Negro woman employed by the New York City Protestant Council who had been publicly active in attempts to force integration but had currently been outspoken in favor of "community control". She was rather well received, however, because she maintained the canons of tact and politeness which governed the meeting. In addition, she legitimated her position to the panel by affirming allegiance to the same values as those expressed by the speaker: the ideal of good, integrated education for all children. She had fought for this "for twelve years" in the past but had given up on the possibility of effective integration in the forseeable future. She thus felt it necessary to accept and work with segregated schools in order to help the generation of children presently caught in them. She countered the speaker's academic legitimacy with her own: "I am also a collector and a reader and I have a file somewhat comparable to yours ... and from where I stand some of the significant things were not presented." And further, "I'm the only one here who can speak somewhat directly for the ghetto residents since I've spent the greater part of my life in one." Her tact and her practical rather than ideological justification of decentralization and community control made her difficult to attack. She was treated by the speaker as simply one of the participants but she refused to be part of the classroom and insisted on sufficient time to present her views fully. The major response to her was a re-statement of the fact that the schools cannot be expected to reform society. Her reply was that they must at least prepare the students who will reform it.

The speaker for the third seminar was something of an enigma to the panel. After the session several stated that they had looked forward to hearing him although they were somewhat disappointed by his talk because he had not given any "answers". The speaker had achieved some fame (or notoriety) as an outspoken critic of Board of Education policies while he was principal of a school in Harlem. He was currently a district superintendent, having been requested for the position by the district's local board in the face of considerable resistance from the Board of Education. He spoke with the authority of a professional schoolman with many years experience as both teacher and principal. At the same time he was known to be an "outsider" willing to stand up to "110 Livingston Street" (Board of Education headquarters).

In a straightforward. polite manner the speaker analyzed the problems of the schools in a way which directly or indirectly attacked much of the conventional wisdom held by principals. While his topic was "What curriculum is appropriate for the urban secondary education of the future?" he stated that he would attempt to give a perspective for answering the question rather than actually answering it, since he felt that "everything in the school is part of the curriculum including relationships between students and teachers". He criticized middle-class education for producing test-passers who did not love learning. He discussed his experience with ghetto children in which a determined effort, with several adults available to help children in the classroom and with small classes, had raised IQ and reading scores rather dramatically. When challenged with the impossibility of gettings funds for such an endeavor the speaker stated that principals had to be willing to use their schools as bases for organizing parents to demand from headquarters the things they needed. He was sure that would bring an adverse reaction from 110 Livingston Street, something that had been ruled out in their careers by their desire for advancement. Without this effort, however, he felt they were not fully doing their job.

Much of what the speaker said was not comprehended or was discounted by the participants because it did not make sense within the framework of organizational imperatives and duties which tend to set the limits of the possible for career administrators. The most striking example of this was one principal's response to the speaker's claim that schools which serve ghetto children must protect them from the energy-draining fights in which they are constantly involved. The speaker's premise was that the school cannot win the respect and cooperation of such students if it does not intervene in their lives in a demonstrably protective, concerned, and trustworthy manner. One principal voriferously and resentfully defended himself against the implication that schools do not protect children and have their best interests at heart by describing how actively he stops fighting and punishes it in his school. He was vindictive toward troublesome students to an extent that contradicted the original meaning of the speaker.

The overriding demands of discipline in overcrowded schools with poorly motivated students leaves little energy or inclination for sympathy and concern for the mass of students whom the school is incapable of "reaching". Since the schools are seen as the community repository of middle-class decency and learning they must stand firm in defense of those values, and it is the principal who is held responsible for making it all work. Those students and others who are unable or unwilling to subscribe to those values easily become enemies and the principal tends toward the outlook of a colonial administrator defending an outpost of civilization against those who would tear it down.

The speaker at the fourth seminar, an official of the Council of Supervisory Associations who was a high school principal on leave from his school, was greeted with camaraderie as a "politician" who would "talk straight" after the overly-general talks by the previous speakers. The speaker gave a view from the top, discussing the outlook and needs of supervisors as an organized group among the competing organizations and groups with an interest in school policy. His presentation was largely a reiteration of the occupational ideology of the principals. The Board of Education was criticized for not standing up to pressure, militant groups were characterized as made up of politically ambitious individuals, the prerogatives of professionals were defended, and the loss of public confidence in principals and other schoolmen was defined as a major source of difficulty. There were nostalgic references to the dignified serenity principals had once enjoyed. When a participant from a vocational high school defended as thoroughly American the right of every group to control its schools he was shouted down. For schoolmen, the "community" means the white middle-class which has been willing to leave the schools to the professionals.

The speaker emphasized the need for increased political power and urged the principals to aid local legislators in their campaigns in order to gain friends in the state legislature. This was not enthusiastically received; political activity violates principals' self-images as scholarly professionals even though it is acknowledged as a necessity for protection of their interests and for securing more funds for the schools.

The theme of the speaker's presentation was the difficulty in giving meaning to "community control" because of the small number of well-defined communities (e.g. Forest Hills) in New York City. Inside stories from negotiations and court proceedings the Council of Supervisory Associations had been involved in were shared to illustrate the irresponsibility of black insurgents and the weakness of the Board of Education. The meeting was conducted with a general tone of concerned, sometimes bewildered, sometimes angry professionals trying to do a decent job while faced with overwhelming problems not of their own making and operating within a bureaucracy over which they have little control.

## The Seminar As A Research Technique

An analysis of the interactional dynamics of the seminars should begin with a consideration of the elements of the situation we created. The cooperation of the principals was based on several factors. Payment was made to them commensurate with their sense of the value of their time and the worth of their services. The remuneration thus validated their own sense of self-importance. In addition, the seminars provided an opportunity for them to participate in research sponsored by the U.S. Office of Education. They were thus to some extent acting as "consultants" on the role of the principal and corresponding issues of contemporary urban education. At the same time the participants saw the seminars as an opportunity for them as experts, deeply involved in the problems of urban education, to press their views on important government officials who are ordinarily inaccessable to them.

The situation created was an ambiguous one, however. While they felt a moral obligation to the project because they were being paid, they were at the same time in the threatening position of being observed and studied by the researchers who would report their findings to the funding agency. They thus had reason to be at the same time both defensive and cooperative: defensive because they were being studied, obligated to cooperate because they were being paid, and at the same time eager to use the seminars as a forum for their views and an opportunity to influence the sponsoring agency.

The principals' response to this situation was, to the extent possible, to control the quality and content of their participation so as to insure that the research report would incorporate their views. They were punctual, polite, and behaved with decorum except when confronted with enemies at which time such restrained behavior was both useless and unnecessary. At such times anger, hostility, and contempt were freely expressed and indeed seen as appropriate.

In regard to the researchers and the affiliated institution (The New School for Social Research) the principals were unable to establish a definition that would allow them to formulate a position. The researchers were probed at various times, particularly in the concluding seminar, to ascertain the nature of their involvement in the seminars and to locate whatever political interests the researchers and the affiliated school might have. We remained noncommital, simply explaining that we sought an understanding of the role of the principal and the problems he encounters. The New School for Social Research had no place in the principals' imagery of the various institutions related to the issues of New York City public education since neither the institution nor the researchers had had any such prior involvement.

The participants used each seminar as an opportunity to speak to those agencies or organizations which the speakers represented. Whether they saw the speaker as friendly or hostile they made every attempt to insure that all the major points of their position were clearly and forcefully expressed during the limited time available. Thus each seminar was both a chance to present their point of view to representatives of various agencies and an opportunity to further shape the report for the researchers and the Office of Education.

The pattern of interaction in each seminar was largely determined by what the speaker said. If he clearly identified with principals and their problems the participants voluntarily offered further illustrations and in-depth examples to support the speaker's point of view. Each principal drew on his personal experience as a reservoir of material for his contribution to the seminar. As principals shared their experiences a profile of occupational biographies emerged. Principals learned from each others' experience and occasionally expressed surprise at the experiences related by others. In this type of seminar the pattern of interaction was unorganized, participants were courteous, and the seminar required almost no direction.

The pattern of interaction when the speaker was hostile was somewhat different. Then each principal responded to the real or imagined hostility of the speaker in terms of his own particular defenses and feelings of inadequacy. Each principal initially reacted personally, defending himself against charges which were not, however, directed at him as an individual. No matter how general the criticism, the principals took it as a personal attack and responded on a personal level. In the early stages of such a seminar almost no communication took place between the speaker and seminar participants. It required the sympathetic efforts of the speaker if the level of misinterpretation were to be deescalated and a meaningful discussion attempted. If the speaker reacted with hostility, then he and the participants spent the entire session attacking one another with neither listening to the other except to get cues around which to prepare a defense.

In spite of differences in career experience and differences in the types of high schools represented the most striking aspect of the interactional pattern was the near unanimity of response and similarity of views expressed in each seminar. We found this quality of unanimity especially surprising because the participants had not previously interacted with one another in this type of setting. We could only conclude that the strength of their vested interest in maintaining a unanimous public front overrides almost all other considerations.

The seminars functioned as a microcosmic representation of the macrocosm in which principals must enact their roles. Within the seminars nearly every tension in the city educational system was revealed. Unresolved but buried issues confronting the principals were revealed if only by the unwillingness to carry the discussion in certain directions. A tacit agreement existed to maintain the line which had already been developed on most issues within the Principals' Association. When this agreement was threatened by questioning their position or by expressions of sympathy toward groups already defined as enemies the other participants attacked and disciplined the person who had tested the line.

The principals' resentment toward insurgent groups and their demands, politicians, academics, all critics, researchers, the Board of Education, etc. were often revealed in subtle ways. Hostility was expressed openly only in counter-attacking someone defined as an enemy. Ordinarily, however, at the level of seminar discourse propriety, etiquette, intellectualism, reserve, and self-control tended to screen if not mask the expression of emotions, attitudes, resentments, and political opinions of the participants. The seminar as a formal instrument of research has the weakness that participan[illegible] have the expectation that decorum should be maintained. Because of this, the quality of language used in seminar discourse is frequently oblique, indirect, and dissimulating. It would therefore be difficult to interpret the seminars without prior experience and familiarity with the issues, strains, and conflicts with which the principals are involved. This prior familiarity, analysis, and understanding appears to be necessary to provide a framing device within which both to plan the seminars and to interpret them as events. We had anticipated this somewhat by a careful choice of topics, speakers, and guests. Had we chosen neutral topics rather than controversial ones or had our speakers been chosen for expertise rather than point of view, the seminars would have been much less evocative than they proved to be. Our conclusion is that the seminar as a method of research is most useful in conjunction with prior interviews and when the researchers have a broad familiarity with the larger institutional framework within which issues arise.

In relation to our own research goals we found the seminars useful and successful as a research technique. They provided a setting in which we could observe the interaction of principals with one another and with speakers regarded by them as friends or enemies. The seminars were thus especially useful as means of gaining insight into the functioning of principals' individual and collective defenses.

These aspects of the principals' presentation of self were not available to view in personal interviews where the principal could control the flow of interaction and maintain his desired style. With men for whom verbal articulation is an occupational skill the seminar research technique can provide a forum for their ideas and an opportunity for dramatic statement, conflict, anger, and consensus - in short, an entire dimension of response not called out in individual, private interviews.

Typescripts of the seminars are being forwarded to the U.S. Office of Education along with this report.

## Conclusion

The principals emerge as embattled administrators individually and collectively holding the line against encroachments on their authority within the schools and fending off criticisms of the schools from without. The confrontation of the principals' rhetoric of professional expertise and their demand for autonomy with the admitted failure of the school system to adequately educate its lower-class black clientele is resolved by placing responsibility outside their own sphere of possible action. The High School Principals Association and the more comprehensive Council of Supervisory Associations function as veto groups to protect the interests of their members in response to the initiatives of the Board of Education, the teachers' union, and those outside groups demanding changes in the structure of the system. In order to defend the system in which his career is embedded and to which his expertise as a "practical schoolman" is applicable he becomes a defender of the status quo. He interprets the loss of public respect for the schools as due primarily to the Board of Education's refusal to stand firm in defense of the school system against critical groups.

Due partly to limits on his time but also due to the type of preparation provided by the system of advancement within which he has been successful it may be that the principal's role should be split into its two components: that of manager of a complex business-like enterprise and that of "principal teacher". The selection process for the latter should be on the basis of skills needed for experimentation in secondary education and those needed for working with a lower-class clientele in promoting the interests of school children in the increasingly volatile and politicized world of urban education. For such a change the "principal teacher" would have to be granted sufficient autonomy in budget and curriculum to make real initiative and innovation possible.

At present the urban high schools other than those with a majority of academic, college-bound students, are tending toward a prison-like model. It may be that with "deprived" children a model approximating a home substitute would be more useful with extensive use of local personnel as teacher aides, a longer school day encompassing more recreational and social activities, smaller classes, and teachers trained or re-trained to communicate with respect with students who violate their middle-class conceptions of what a school should be and what children should be like.